

June 19, 1960

Dr. H. O. Halvorson
School of Life Sciences
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

Dear Dr. Halvorson:

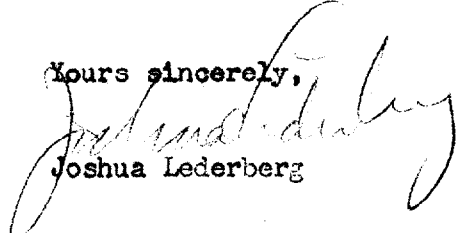
Kim Atwood is one of my dearest friends. Both at Wisconsin and here at Stanford I have made urgent efforts to support an appointment for him as a research professor, as would give my colleagues and myself the benefit of his keen intelligence and scientific insight. I know that he is not altogether content at Chicago, and he deserves the kind of position where he can most effectively exploit his unique talents.

But I have to urge strongly against his contemplated appointment as a department head, for your sake, and I believe his own. Over the years he has displayed an incredible irresponsibility in dealing with matters of routine business, and I simply could not contemplate seeing him in a position where the welfare of other people and of the school might depend on his timely handling of paperwork, of keeping appointments, and so forth. I have to admire his ability to ignore responsibilities outside his own laboratory; and doubtless much busy work would be delegated; but I feel certain this just isn't the kind of job for him. He also has his own sense of compassion, and I also fear for his distress at seeing the chaotic consequences of this type of behavior.

If you can find a protected position for Atwood, and can interest him in it, you should go after him without stinting, but the appointment you indicated would be a ~~sk~~ catastrophe.

Please keep this letter in confidence. For confirmation, or an independent reaction, you might consult Francis Ryan at Columbia; H B Steinbach at Chicago; J F Crow at Wisconsin; Sol Spiegelman ~~disbused~~ to know him rather well too.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg